



Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide



Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

COURTS IN THE CLASSROOM

AN INTERACTIVE JOURNEY INTO CIVICS

Welcome to the Courts in the Classroom web site, developed by the Judicial Council of California, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and the California Courts. The site was created to help students better understand the role of courts in our system of democracy. The stories, games, and other activities demonstrate how the Judicial Branch of government protects our civil liberties such as the right of free speech and privacy, and helps society resolve fundamental conflict.

Additionally, the site explores important civics topics from the perspective of the Judicial Branch, including checks and balances, judicial independence, and due process of law.

Finally, the site examines the role of judges in the judicial system, and how courts function in terms of procedures in both civil and criminal cases.

This site has been created to be your guide to using the Courts in the Classroom web site effectively.



Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)[> Introduction](#)

Introduction

Constitutional democracy strikes a delicate balance between the rights of individuals and the needs of society. It balances the principles of majority rule with respect for minority rights. And it does so by dispersing power between the branches of government and citizens, ensuring that each branch remains within the confines of its authority and that no single branch can wield unlimited powers.

Legislators and members of the Executive Branch are generally responsive to the will of the majorities that elect them, but judges are actually required to ignore the will of the majority if it runs counter to the Constitution. The obligation of judges to make decisions not based on popular opinion but, instead, on the basis of law places judges squarely in the cross hairs of some of today's most controversial public policies. Issues ranging from wireless wiretaps, to environmental protection, gun ownership, flag burning, gay marriage, affirmative action, and many more are all subject to the scrutiny of the courts.

Yet recent studies suggest that a great many Americans don't fully understand the separation of powers or its importance to our system of democracy. Fewer still understand the meaning and purpose of judicial independence. Civics education and the media have familiarized citizens with many important constitutional issues such as the exclusion of illegally seized evidence or the right to counsel. But the connection between the role of judges in applying these laws fairly and evenly in all cases and the safeguarding of our civil liberties is not always clear.

The independence of the judiciary is the cornerstone of the branch's power. It ensures the judiciary the ability to consider the facts and the law of each case with an open mind and reach an unbiased judgment without fear of political pressure or other reprisal. And it is the independence of the judiciary that ensures impartiality.

The Courts in the Classroom Web site project is one of many efforts of the Judicial Council of California and the California courts to better inform citizens about the crucial work of the judiciary and the courts.



Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)[> Overview](#)

What is the *Courts in the Classroom Project*?

The Courts in the Classroom is a Web-based project intended to team up educators and the courts to teach California's youth about the role of the judicial branch in American democracy. Using Web-based technologies, the project provides age-appropriate materials that can be used by:

Educators to introduce basic concepts about constitutional democracy and the role of the third branch of government to students in a user-friendly format that is appealing to youth

Students who are researching civics-related material for school or working independently to understand the foundational institutions of American democracy

Judges and other court professionals for conducting outreach in the community, especially with youth, that focusing on the underlying principles of the court system and the constitutional balance of power.

The project uses graphics, interactivity, and youth-oriented, sequential storylines (most of which are based on actual court cases) to attract youth to the site and hold their attention once they arrive. The stories and activities are grouped together into topic modules, such as protesting or privacy. The topic modules are entirely self-contained, encouraging kids to explore on their own.

At the same time, they can be "stacked" together, allowing a teacher to tailor the content to fit his or her lesson plan objectives. A teacher might assign, for example, several modules covering aspects of the First Amendment as an introduction to more in-depth discussions to take place in class. In this way, the site provides a fun way to learn the basics but also ensures that everyone has the same information at the initiation of a lesson plan.



Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)[> Overview](#)

What is the *Courts in the Classroom Project*? *(continued)*

By way of example, a civics lesson plan focused on due process might begin with students reading through the modules What Is Due Process?, Criminal Cases, and Equal Protection.

The What Is Due Process? module explains due process, providing contextual examples for each principle; the Criminal Cases module applies due process principles to criminal trials; and the Equal Protection module discusses how due process requirements must be the same for all people regardless of race, gender, religion, or even the state in which a person resides.

Depending on the teacher's objective, certain parts of these storylines can be emphasized to achieve different goals. For instance, a teacher might ask upper- grade students to prepare a paper on how Title IX relates to the case Brown v. the Board of Education and the curfew storyline highlighted in the What Is Due Process? module. If the teacher provides a hint—no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness without due process of law—the students will be oriented to due process concepts and the exercise will help students understand the scope of due process and its importance in our democratic system.



Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

How to Use

> Government &
Civics classes

Bringing civics into
other curricula

How to use the site

Government and Civics Classes

For teachers of government and civics, the site can be used in a number of ways. It can serve as a precursor to a lesson plan, ensuring all students are on the same page at the beginning of the lesson plan. For instance, a civics lesson plan focused on due process might begin with students reading through the modules What Is Due Process?, Criminal Cases, and Equal Protection. The What is Due Process? module explains due process, providing contextual examples through story for each principle; the Criminal Cases module applies due process principles to criminal trials; and the Equal Protection module discusses how due process requirements must be the same for all people regardless of race, gender, or religion. Using the content links for The Big Ideas menu in the section "Understanding the navigation of the site" will help teachers identify the appropriate modules and/or storylines for their lesson plans.

The site can also be used to reinforce the objectives of the teacher's lesson plan. For example, a teacher might assign the modules What Is Due Process?, Equal Protection, and Curfew as homework. Upper-grade students might additionally be asked to prepare a paper on how Title IX relates to the case Brown v. the Board of Education covered in the Equal Protection module and the curfew storyline highlighted in the What Is Due Process? module or the Curfew module. If the teacher provides a hint—no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness without due process of law—the students will be oriented to due process concepts and the exercise will help students understand the scope of due process and its importance in our democratic system.

The site can also serve as the core of a lesson plan. A lesson on separation of powers and checks and balances could use modules listed under About Judges sub-menu in The Third Branch menu bar for the judicial branch powers portion of the lesson plan. Activities such as "think writes" (tell me what you think in a page or less) or bringing a judge into the classroom to discuss the contents of the various modules could greatly enhance the learning experience.



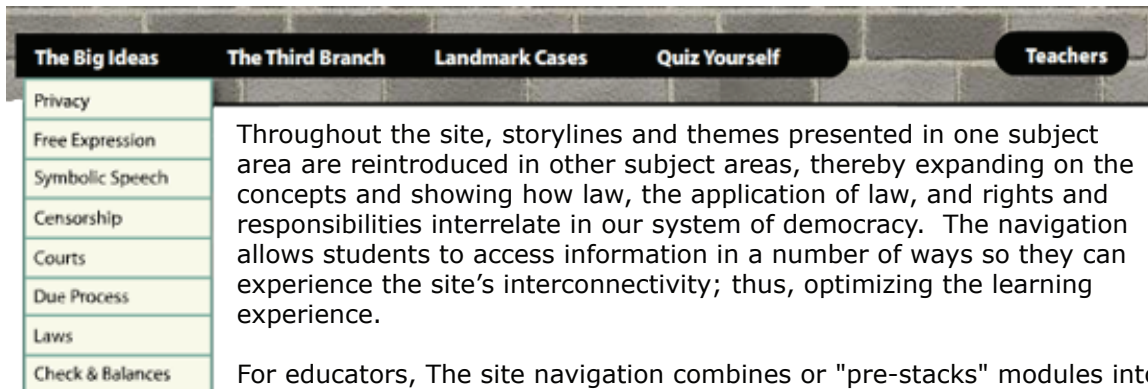
Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)[> Navigating](#)

Understanding the navigation of the site



Throughout the site, storylines and themes presented in one subject area are reintroduced in other subject areas, thereby expanding on the concepts and showing how law, the application of law, and rights and responsibilities interrelate in our system of democracy. The navigation allows students to access information in a number of ways so they can experience the site's interconnectivity; thus, optimizing the learning experience.

For educators, The site navigation combines or "pre-stacks" modules into overarching themes, such as Censorship and About Judges. These themes are captured in sub-menus under The Big Ideas, Third Branch, and Landmark Cases menu bars. The section summaries better explain how the navigation works.

The Big Ideas menu breaks down the site content into overarching themes such as Privacy and Censorship. Using The Big Ideas menu bar allows a student writing a report on censorship, for example, to directly access all storylines about or related to the censorship theme (The Big Ideas> Censorship> Free Press; The Big Ideas> Censorship> Free Speech; The Big Ideas> Censorship> Protesting). In this example, all three storylines concern the 1st Amendment and the right of expression. After going through the material in each of the links, students will have a better understanding of the meaning of censorship and how it impacts our daily lives. They will also gain understanding of the Supreme Court's role in interpreting what is protected expression under the 1st Amendment, the exceptions, and how the lower courts apply the decisions of the Supreme Court in subsequent cases.

However, not all included modules in a theme will be directly on point. A module might be included because it contains a storyline that demonstrates how various laws and rights are applied in court procedures. For instance, while the Criminal Cases module under the Due Process sub-menu does not specifically talk about due process, it demonstrates due process. Some of these relationships will require a teacher or judge to mediate the content and make the necessary connections. Nonetheless, every module stands alone. It has an objective (captured in its title) with a beginning, middle, and end.



Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

The Big Ideas

> Privacy

[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Checks & Balances](#)

The Third Branch

Landmark Cases

Quiz Yourself

Summary of section contents

The Big Ideas menu bar > Privacy

Search & Seizure

The search & seizure module introduces students to the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution through a story about police searching the backpack of a girl who allegedly spray-painted on someone's wall. It also tells the story of the landmark case *T.L.O. v. New Jersey* that involves a search of a student's purse after she was discovered smoking in the school bathroom.

Privacy at School

The Privacy at School module builds on the Search & Seizure module, but can stand alone. It contains three storylines, all interrelated. It begins with a story about a boy upset that he had to take a drug test at school and explains why students' Fourth Amendment rights are limited while they are in school. This story segues to a discussion of the *Vernonia School District v. Acton* case, which involves a student refusing to take a drug test. *Vernonia* leads into a case in which a student was strip-searched after a police dog pointed her out as having drugs on her person.

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Check & Balances](#)

"Search & Seizure" explored in *T.L.O. vs. New Jersey*



From "Privacy at School."



Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Checks & Balances](#)[The Third Branch](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Big Ideas menu bar > Free Expression

Free Speech

The Free Speech module introduces students to the First Amendment right to free speech and tells a story about a student being suspended from school for wearing an anti-war t-shirt. The module also contains a rendering of the landmark case *Tinker vs. Des Moines School District*, which focused on students wearing black armbands to school in protest of war.

Protesting

The Protesting module introduces students to the First Amendment right to assembly. The main storyline centers around the newsies strike at the turn of the century, but also covers the farmworkers' movement and the Civil Rights movement. The module also discusses the case *Edwards v. South Carolina*, involving the arrest of a number of young people protesting segregation.

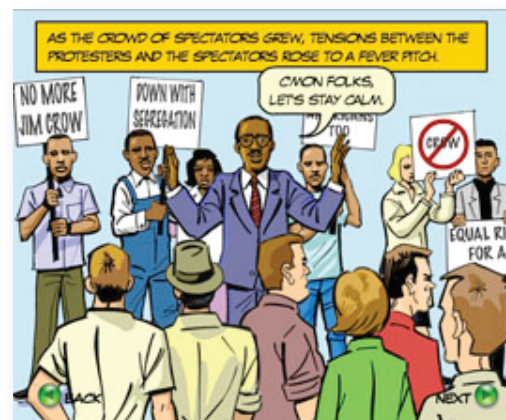
Graffiti

The Graffiti module explores exceptions to First Amendment expression rights and includes a story about kids visiting a museum and discovering that someone had painted a mustache on a famous painting.

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Check & Balances](#)

The Story of *Tinker v. Des Moines* as told in the Free Speech section of Symbolic Speech.



A protest scene from "*Edwards vs. South Carolina*"



From "*Graffiti*."



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[> Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Checks & Balances](#)

The Third Branch

[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Big Ideas menu bar > Symbolic Speech

Free Speech

The Free Speech module introduces students to the First Amendment right to free speech and tells a story about a student being suspended from school for wearing an anti-war t-shirt. The module also discusses the landmark case *Tinker vs. Des Moines School District*, which focused on students wearing black armbands to school in protest of war.

Dress Code

The Dress Code module discusses two minor First Amendment cases involving the right to wear long hair to school.

T-Shirt Game

The T-Shirt module is an interactive game addressing the issue of whether banning students from wearing t-shirts with logos on them violates students' First Amendment rights.

What Judges Do

The What Judges Do module opens with one of those terrible, horrible, rotten, no-good days in which everything goes wrong and everyone wants justice! The storyline describes the types of conflict that courts help resolve and the role of the judge in applying the law to the facts of each case. One of the conflicts discussed is the right wear a t-shirt with an anti-war logo to school.

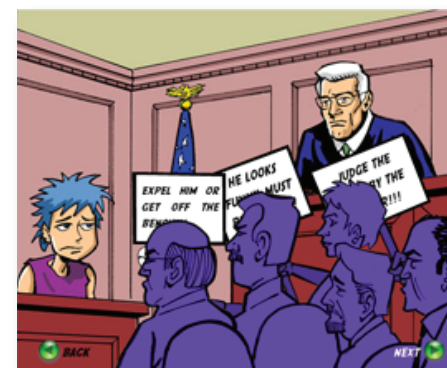
The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Check & Balances](#)

The Story of *Tinker v. Des Moines* as told in the Free Speech section of Symbolic Speech.



Our host Justice in the Symbolic Speech T-shirt game.



From "What Judges Do"



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[> Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Checks & Balances](#)[The Third Branch](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Big Ideas menu bar > Censorship

Free Speech

The Free Speech module introduces students to the First Amendment right to free speech and tells a story about a student being suspended from school for wearing an anti-war t-shirt. The module also discusses the landmark case *Tinker v. Des Moines School District*, which focused on students wearing black armbands to school in protest of war.

Free Press

The Free Press module tells a story about a principal's decision to censor a story for the school newspaper concerning a student who flunked a civics class but was allowed to retake the test so she could be in the school play. While the landmark case, *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, is not specifically detailed because of the difficulties of illustrating the sensitive subject matter, the principles and findings of the case are covered in a book sequence at the end of the Free Press module.

Protesting

The Protesting module introduces students to the First Amendment right to assembly. The main storyline concerns the newsies' strike at the turn of the century but also discusses the farmworkers' movement and the Civil Rights movement. The module also talks about the case *Edwards v. South Carolina*, involving the arrest of young people protesting Jim Crow laws and segregation.

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[● Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Check & Balances](#)

"Free Press" in schools.



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)

> Courts

[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Checks & Balances](#)

The Third Branch

Landmark Cases

Quiz Yourself

Summary of section contents

The Big Ideas menu bar > Courts

Civil Cases

The Civil Cases module explores how courts resolve conflict and covers both torts and contracts as examples of civil cases. The module also illustrates civil trials through a story about a juggler who loses control of his balls and injures a passerby.

Criminal Cases

The Criminal Cases module describes the criminal justice system through a story about a superhero mistakenly charged with the crime of robbery. The story begins with the crime and proceeds on to the arrest and the reading of rights, charging the crime, arraignment, discovery, the trial, and, finally, sentencing.

What Courts Do

The What Courts Do module explores the purposes for courts. It begins with a story about an immigrant about to go to court and worried about what might happen. Justice reassures him that everything will be fine while explaining the purpose of courts.

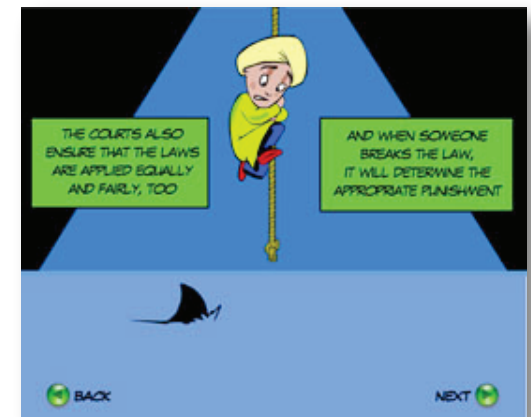
What is Due Process

The What Is Due Process? module explores the meaning and purpose of due process. It is accomplished through a story inside a story. The opening story concerns kids coming home from a concert after curfew. As it turns out, the curfew storyline is really a movie. When the director (who is Justice) yells "cut," one of the actors says that he really does not understand what's going on. Using movies, Justice explains due process.

What Judges Do

The What Judges Do module opens with a terrible, horrible, rotten, no-good day in which everything goes wrong and everyone wants justice! The storyline describes the types of conflict that courts help resolve and the role of the judge in applying the law to the facts of each case.

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Check & Balances](#)

From "What Courts Do"



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[> Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Checks & Balances](#)[The Third Branch](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Big Ideas menu bar > Due Process

What is Due Process

The What Is Due Process? module explores the meaning and purpose of due process. It is accomplished through a story inside a story. The opening story concerns kids coming home from a concert after curfew. As it turns out, the curfew storyline is really a movie. When the director (who is Justice) yells "cut," one of the actors says that he really does not understand what's going on. Using movies, Justice explains due process.

What Judges Do

The What Judges Do module opens with a terrible, horrible, rotten, no-good day in which everything goes wrong and everyone wants justice! The storyline describes the types of conflict that courts help resolve and the role of the judges in applying the law to the facts of each case. A section on judicial independence describes how fair and even application of law requires that judges be able to rule on cases without retaliation from politicians or the public.

What Courts Do

The What Courts Do module explores the purposes for courts. It begins with a story about an immigrant about to go to court and worried about what might happen. Justice reassures him that everything will be fine while explaining the purpose of courts.

Civil Cases

The Civil Cases module explores how courts resolve conflict and covers both torts and contracts as examples of civil cases. The module also illustrates civil trials through a story about a juggler who loses control of his balls and injures a passerby.

Criminal Cases

The Criminal Cases module describes the criminal justice system through a story about a superhero mistakenly charged with the crime of robbery. The story begins with the crime and proceeds on to the arrest and the reading of rights, charging the crime, arraignment, discovery, the trial, and, finally, sentencing.

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Check & Balances](#)

Exploring "Due Process" while making a movie about curfew.



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[> Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Checks & Balances](#)[The Third Branch](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Big Ideas menu bar > Due Process (*continued*)

Equal Protection

The Equal Protection module discusses how due process requirements must be the same for all people regardless of race, gender, religion, or even which state a person lives in. This is accomplished through a story involving a high school girl wanting to play on the football team. The module also discusses the case *Brown v. the Board of Education* in a book sequence that Justice asks the athlete to read.

Curfew

The Curfew module explores constitutional issues associated with curfew laws, including the right to travel, arbitrary laws, and the balancing of individual liberties with the social good. The story involves a boy not quite 18 walking home from the ice cream store where he bought treats for "sci-fi" night at home. While walking home, he's stopped for violating curfew.

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Check & Balances](#)



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)

> Laws

[Checks & Balances](#)

The Third Branch

[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Big Ideas menu bar > Laws

Federal Constitution

This section provides both historical information about the United States Constitution and a link for the contents of the Constitution.

California Constitution

This section provides both historical information about the California Constitution and a link to the contents of the California Constitution.

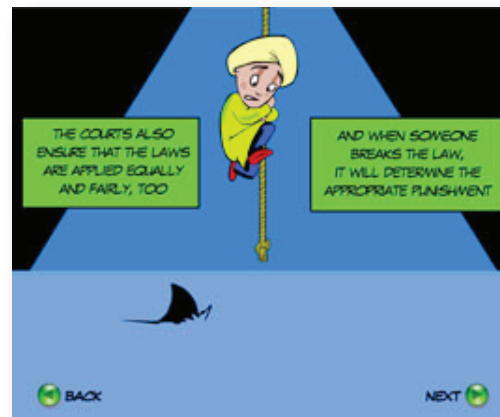
What Courts Do

The What Courts Do module explores the purpose of courts. It begins with a story about an immigrant about to go to court and worried about what might happen. Justice reassures him that everything will be fine while explaining the purpose of courts.

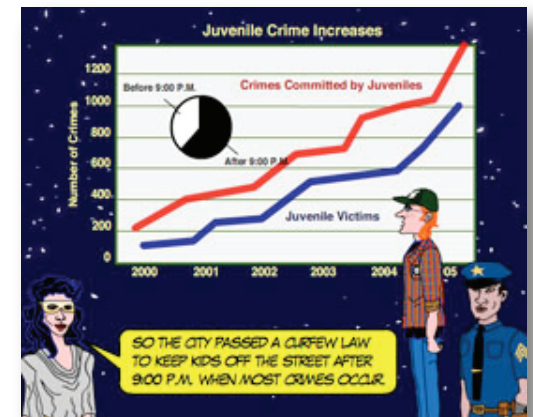
Curfew

The Curfew module explores constitutional issues associated with curfew laws, including the right to travel, arbitrary laws, and the balancing of individual liberties with the social good. The story concerns a boy not quite 18 walking home from the ice cream story where he bought treats for "sci-fi" night at home. While walking home, he's stopped for violating curfew.

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[Check & Balances](#)

Explaining unusual punishment in "What Courts Do."



From "Curfew."



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[> Checks & Balances](#)[The Third Branch](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Big Ideas menu bar > Checks & Balances

What Judges Do

The What Judges Do module opens with a terrible, horrible, rotten, no-good day in which everything goes wrong, and everyone wants justice! The storyline describes the types of conflict that courts help resolve and the role of the judge in applying the law to the facts of each case. There are also sections on judicial independence and checks and balances.

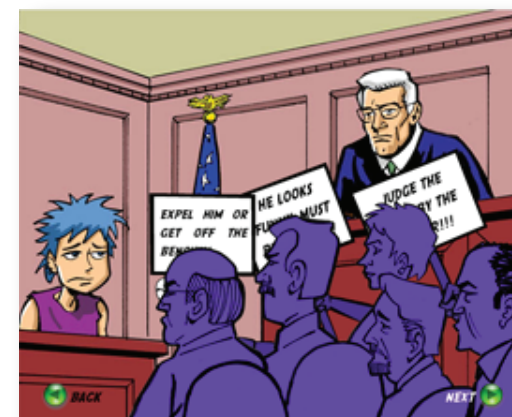
Trail of Tears

The Trail of Tears module opens with a young immigrant asking Justice to explain the checks and balances system. Justice takes the boy through a chart on checks and balances. The chart contains descriptions of each branch and details their powers and the checks on those powers. The module concludes with a discussion of the landmark case *Worcester v. Georgia*, which demonstrates the failure of checks and balances, resulting in the forced removal of the Cherokee people from their homeland and the Trail of Tears.

The Big Ideas

[Privacy](#)[Free Expression](#)[Symbolic Speech](#)[Censorship](#)[Courts](#)[Due Process](#)[Laws](#)[● Check & Balances](#)

Exploring the events that led to the "Trail of Tears" in Checks and Balances.



From "What Judges Do"



Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)[> Navigating](#)

Understanding the navigation of the site



The Third Branch menu consists of two thematic sub-menus that cover the overarching purpose of this site: the role of the judiciary and courts in our system of democracy. The content contained in these two thematic sub-menus provide the necessary foundations for teachers wanting to develop lessons plans focused on the judicial branch.

While the two sub-menus in The Third Branch are specifically about the Judicial Branch, every module and storyline in the site addresses judicial branch functions in some capacity. For instance, the Graffiti module contains a section on how judges determine punishment for graffiti crimes. All landmark cases demonstrate the interpretive functions of the appellate courts, and the introduction to the Search & Seizure module talks about judges needing probable cause to issue search warrants.



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

[The Big Ideas](#)[The Third Branch](#)[> About Judges](#)[About Courts](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Third Branch menu bar > About Judges

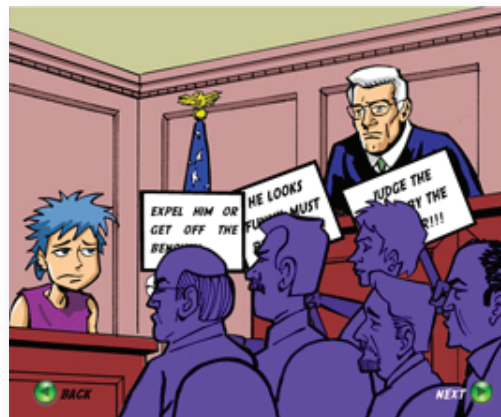
What Judges Do

The What Judges Do module opens with a terrible, horrible, rotten, no-good day in which everything goes wrong and everyone wants justice! The storyline describes the types of conflict that courts help resolve and the role of the judges in applying the law to the facts of each case. A section on judicial independence describes how the fair and even application of law requires that judges be able to rule on cases without retaliation from politicians or the public.

Checks and Balances

The Checks and Balances module opens with a young immigrant asking Justice to explain the checks and balances system. Justice takes the boy through a chart on checks and balances. The chart contains descriptions of each branch and details their powers and the checks on those powers. The module concludes with a discussion of the landmark case Worcester v. Georgia, which demonstrates the failure of checks and balances, resulting in the removal of the Cherokee people from their homeland and the Trail of Tears.

The Third Branch

[About Judges](#)[About Courts](#)

From "What Judges Do"



Exploring "Checks and Balances."



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

[The Big Ideas](#)[The Third Branch](#)[> About Judges](#)[About Courts](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Third Branch menu bar > About Judges

What is Due Process

The Due Process module explores the meaning and purpose of due process. It is accomplished through a story inside a story. The opening story concerns kids coming home from a concert after curfew. As it turns out, the curfew storyline is really a movie. When the director (who is Justice) yells "cut," one of the actors says that he really does not understand what's going on. Using movies, Justice explains due process.

Civil Cases

The Civil Trial Process module explores how courts resolve conflict and covers both torts and contracts as examples of civil cases. The module also illustrates civil trial process through a story about a juggler who loses control of his balls and injures a passerby.

Criminal Cases

The Criminal Trial Process module describes the criminal justice system through a story about a superhero mistakenly charged with the crime of robbery. The story begins with the crime and proceeds to the arrest and the reading of rights, charging the crime, arraignment, discovery, the trial, and, finally, sentencing.

The Third Branch

[About Judges](#)[About Courts](#)



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

[The Big Ideas](#)[The Third Branch](#)[About Judges](#)[> About Courts](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Third Branch menu bar > About Courts

What Courts Do

The What Courts Do module explores the purposes for courts. It begins with a story about an immigrant about to go to court and worried about what might happen. Justice reassures him that everything will be fine while explaining the purpose of courts.

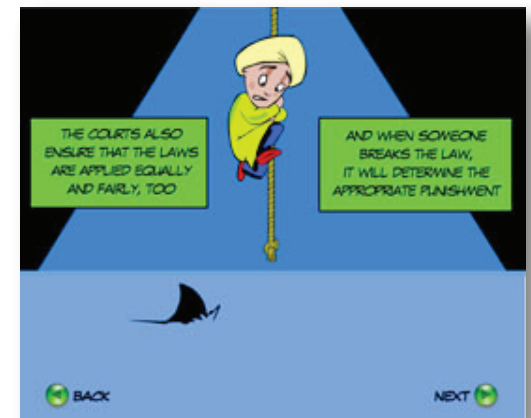
What is Due Process

The What Is Due Process module explores the meaning and purpose of due process. It is accomplished through a story inside a story. The opening story concerns kids coming home from a concert after curfew. As it turns out, the curfew storyline is really a movie. When the director (who is Justice) yells "cut," one of the actors says that he really does not understand what's going on. Using movies, Justice explains due process.

The Third Branch

[About Judges](#)[About Courts](#)

Learning about curfew in "Due Process."



Explaining unusual punishment in "What Courts Do"



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

[The Big Ideas](#)[The Third Branch](#)[About Judges](#)[> About Courts](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Third Branch menu bar > About Courts

The Court System

The Court System module covers the federal and state court systems and how they interact.

Civil Cases

The Civil Cases module explores how courts resolve conflict and covers both torts and contracts as examples of civil cases. The module also illustrates civil trials through a story about a juggler who loses control of his balls and injures a passerby.

Criminal Cases

The Criminal Cases module describes the criminal justice system through a story about a superhero mistakenly charged with the crime of robbery. The story begins with the crime and proceeds on to the arrest and the reading of rights, charging the crime, arraignment, discovery, the trial, and, finally, sentencing.

The Third Branch

[About Judges](#)[About Courts](#)



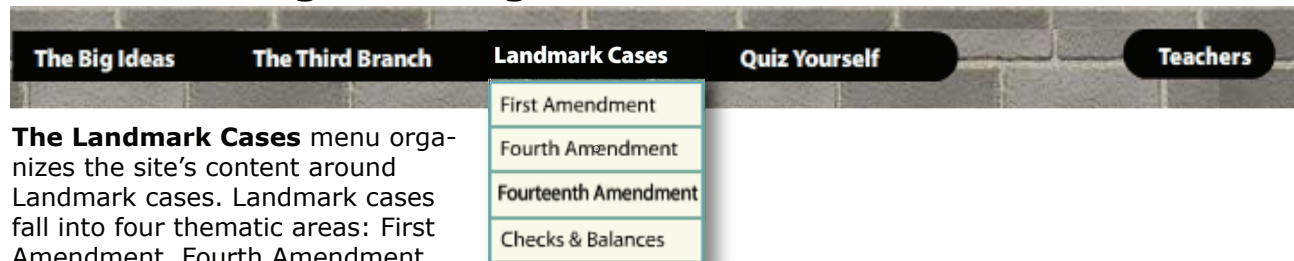
Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)[> Navigating](#)

Understanding the navigation of the site



The Landmark Cases menu organizes the site's content around Landmark cases. Landmark cases fall into four thematic areas: First Amendment, Fourth Amendment, Fourteenth Amendment, and Checks and Balances.

For instance, the case *Tinker v. Des Moines* concerns the First Amendment right of free speech. The First Amendment module consists of an introduction to free speech, the *Tinker* case, a t-shirt game that builds on the ideas set forth in the *Tinker* case, and two related cases that distinguish between expression protected by the First Amendment and expressions that are personal and not protected by the First Amendment.

A teacher wishing to cover free speech or censorship could assign the First Amendment modular as a precursor to the class lesson. Because the concepts build with each storyline in the Landmark Case approach, students can gain a more in depth understanding of the constitutional implications of each covered Amendment.



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

[The Big Ideas](#)[The Third Branch](#)[> First Amendment](#)[Fourth Amendment](#)[Fifteenth Amendment](#)[Checks & Balances](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Landmark Cases menu bar > First Amendment

Tinker

The Tinker module concerns free speech and consists of an introduction to free speech, the case *Tinker v. Des Moines School District*, a t-shirt game that builds on the ideas set forth in the Tinker case, and two related cases that distinguish between expression protected by the First Amendment and expressions that are personal and not protected by the First Amendment.

Edwards

The Edwards module concerns the right to assembly and consists of an introduction to the right of assembly, the case *Edwards v. South Carolina*, and a concluding storyline that focuses on the double-edged sword that comes with expression of rights. Specifically, free speech and the right to assembly mean that we as Americans must recognize these rights for all people, even when we don't agree with what's being said.

Hazelwood School District vs. Kuhlmeier

The Hazelwood module is about freedom of the press, but with a twist: it concerns the rights of students writing for school newspapers. The module begins with a "scoop" that the editor of the newspaper responsibly researches. This story segues into a discussion of the case *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, and concludes with a book sequence at the end of the module that details by example the types of information school officials can rightfully censor.

Landmark Cases

[First Amendment](#)[Fourth Amendment](#)[Fourteenth Amendment](#)[Checks & Balances](#)

Protest scene from "*Edwards vs. South Carolina*"



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

[The Big Ideas](#)[The Third Branch](#)[> First Amendment](#)[Fourth Amendment](#)[Fifteenth Amendment](#)[Checks & Balances](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Landmark Cases menu bar > Fourth Amendment

T.L.O.

The T.L.O. module concerns privacy rights, specifically search and seizure limitations. The module consists of a fairly long introduction to the Fourth Amendment, which is followed by the T.L.O. v. New Jersey case.

Vernonia

The Vernonia module builds on the T.L.O. module. It contains three storylines, all interrelated. It begins with a story that explains why students' Fourth Amendment rights are limited while they are in school. The introductory story is followed by the Vernonia School District v. Acton case and a related case involving searches carried out by dogs. The two cases in this module cover school practices that appear to push the limitations on student privacy rights too far.

Landmark Cases

[First Amendment](#)[Fourth Amendment](#)[Fourteenth Amendment](#)[Checks & Balances](#)

Scene from "T.L.O. vs. New Jersey"



The opening from "Vernonia School District vs. Acton"



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

[The Big Ideas](#)[The Third Branch](#)[> First Amendment](#)[Fourth Amendment](#)[Fifteenth Amendment](#)[Checks & Balances](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Landmark Cases menu bar > Fourteenth Amendment

Brown

The Brown module is concerned with equal protection of the law. It emphasizes how due process requirements must be the same for all people regardless of race, gender, religion, or even which state a person lives in. This is accomplished through an introductory story exploring gender discrimination. The module ends with a discussion of the Brown v. The Board of Education case.

This module is currently under construction.

Landmark Cases

[First Amendment](#)[Fourth Amendment](#)[Fourteenth Amendment](#)[Checks & Balances](#)



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

[The Big Ideas](#)[The Third Branch](#)[> First Amendment](#)[Fourth Amendment](#)[Fifteenth Amendment](#)[Checks & Balances](#)[Landmark Cases](#)[Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents

The Landmark Cases menu bar > Checks & Balances

What Judges Do

The What Judges Do module opens with a terrible, horrible, rotten, no-good day in which everything goes wrong, and everyone wants justice! The storyline describes the types of conflict that courts help resolve and the role of the judge in applying the law to the facts of each case. There are also sections on judicial independence and checks and balances.

Trail of Tears

The Trail of Tears module opens with a young immigrant asking Justice to explain the checks and balances system. Justice takes the boy through a chart on checks and balances. The chart contains descriptions of each branch and details their powers and the checks on those powers. The module concludes with a discussion of the landmark case *Worcester v. Georgia*, which demonstrates the failure of checks and balances, resulting in the forced removal of the Cherokee people from their homeland and the Trail of Tears.

Landmark Cases
First Amendment
Fourth Amendment
Fourteenth Amendment
Checks & Balances



Scene from "Worcester v. Georgia"



Courts in the Classroom

Law Related Education Program

Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)[> Navigating](#)

Understanding the navigation of the site



The Quiz Yourself menu contains a series of questions and answers for every theme in the Web site. The questions all pertain to principles and concepts discussed in the various stories. The answers, however, both reinforce the principles and concepts covered in the stories and build on them.

A teacher may want to go through a quiz in class before assigning modules from the site in order to (1) orient students to the subject matter—for example, “What is free speech? “What is the judge’s job? “Are curfew laws constitutional?”—thereby optimizing the student’s learning capacity as he or she goes through the site and (2) stimulate curiosity since many questions relate to occurrences in the stories—for example, “Should the school have gone to court to get permission to ban the wearing of armbands?” “Can school officials search students they believe broke school rules?”

On the other hand, assigning a quiz at the end of a lesson plan that has incorporated modules from the site reinforces the concepts learned through repetition.



Teacher's Resource Guide

[Introduction](#)[Overview](#)[How to Use](#)[Navigating](#)[Section Summaries](#)[California Standards](#)

Section Summaries

[The Big Ideas](#)
[The Third Branch](#)
[Landmark Cases](#)
[> Quiz Yourself](#)

Summary of section contents



The Quiz Yourself menu bar

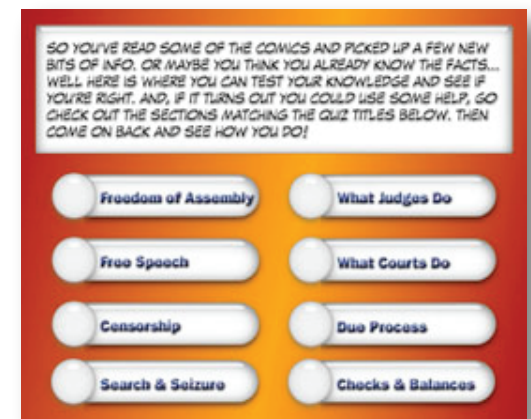
The Quiz Yourself menu contains a series of questions and answers for every theme in the Web site. The questions all pertain to principles and concepts discussed in the various stories. The answers, however, both reinforce the principles and concepts covered in the stories and build on them.

A teacher may want to go through a quiz in class before assigning modules from the site in order to (1) orient students to the subject matter—for example, “What is free speech? “What is the judge’s job? “Are curfew laws constitutional?”—thereby optimizing the student’s learning capacity as he or she goes through the site and (2) stimulate curiosity since many questions relate to occurrences in the stories—for example, “Should the school have gone to court to get permission to ban the wearing of arm-bands?” “Can school officials search students they believe broke school rules?”

On the other hand, assigning a quiz at the end of a lesson plan that has incorporated modules from the site reinforces the concepts learned through repetition.



Sample Quiz from "Quiz Yourself"



"Quiz Yourself" menu page